

Upland Wildlife Habitat Management

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) professionals can help landowners protect and enhance wildlife habitat through technical and cost-share assistance. Visit your local USDA Service Center for more information.

Forestland

Hardwoods

- ♦ Hardwoods provide excellent habitat for wildlife but must be protected from wildfire.
- ♦ Mast (fruits and nuts) producing hardwood species such as oaks provide a healthy and readily available food source.
- ♦ Soft mast producing species such as dogwood, wild cherry, and huckleberry should be protected.



Pine Timber Stands

- ♦ Open pine timber stands provide favorable conditions for grasses and flowering plants which produce seeds and insects for nesting birds to eat.
- ♦ Maintaining an open stand with periodic thinnings allows sunlight to reach the ground for grasses and flowering plants to thrive.
- ♦ Pine stands also provide nesting cover for ground nesting birds like bobwhite quail.
- ♦ Prescribed burning should take place every two to three years.



South Carolina Fact Sheet



Natural Resources Conservation Service
Columbia, South Carolina
May 2000



Forest Openings

- ♦ Forest openings serve as a valuable source of food for wildlife, especially to compensate for seasonal fluctuations in mast production.
- ♦ Planting suggestions include millet, annual lespedeza, partridge pea, and wheat for diversity.
- ♦ Shrub lespedeza may be planted in openings for bobwhite quail.
- ♦ Maintain lespedeza by mowing and fertilizing every three years.



Cropland

Buffers

- ♦ Areas around and through agricultural fields that provide a transition of early successional natural vegetation, usually one to three years old.
- ♦ Buffer zones are generally 25 to 50 feet wide.

- ◆ Types of buffers include field borders, riparian zones, and hedgerows or corridors.

Field Borders

- ◆ Generally 25 to 50 feet wide.
- ◆ Provide insect production for nesting hens and young birds.
- ◆ Maintain by disking every three years.
- ◆ Possible to incorporate annual planting in disked strips.



Hedgerows/Corridors

- ◆ Provide cover and travel corridors.
- ◆ Generally 25 to 50 feet wide.
- ◆ Establish woody vegetation, by plantings or naturally.

Fallow Fields

- ◆ Manage fallow fields by disking one-third of the field each year to provide a diversity of early successional vegetation for nesting and brood rearing for quail and other birds.



Plantings

- ◆ Annual or perennial plantings may be incorporated into forest openings, field borders, or hedgerows.



Cost-share assistance from USDA-NRCS

Wildlife Habitat Establishment has become a major objective since significant changes in the 1996 Farm Bill. Several new programs were added which allowed landowners to receive cost-share and/or annual payments for implementing practices which create or enhance quality wildlife habitat. Examples of cost-share programs and some beneficial wildlife practices allowed are--

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

- ◆ planting native grasses
- ◆ planting longleaf pines with 15-20 percent open land in native grasses, shrubs, and herbs
- ◆ establishing filter strips and riparian buffers

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

- ◆ restoring native plant communities, early successional habitat, and riparian areas
- ◆ establishment of field borders and filter strips around agricultural fields
- ◆ planting hedgerows
- ◆ enhancing wetlands

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

- ◆ establishing field borders, filter strips and grassed waterways to protect water quality and provide habitats to protect bobwhite quail and other species.

POWER for Wildlife

- ◆ practicing mechanical or chemical brush control
- ◆ establishing permanent or annual wildlife plantings
- ◆ managing native vegetation

There has never been a better time to utilize cost-share programs to assist with wildlife habitat enhancement on your property. Contact your local USDA Service Center for more information about the sign-up process for these programs.